

Message Text

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70

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 IO-14

COA-02 DLOS-07 DRC-01 SAJ-01 NEA-14 /139 W

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R 041645Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3337

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

SECDEF WASHDC

AOMCONSUL THESSALONIKI 897

USMISSION NEW YORK

CINCUSAFE

USDOCOSOUTH

USCINCEUR

USNMR SHAPE

CINCUSAREUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 3397

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TU, GR

SUBJECT: GREEK/TURKISH AEGEAN PROBLEM

1. I TOOK OCCASION OF MY LUNCHEON YESTERDAY, JUNE 3, WITH
TURKISH AMBASSADOR GURUN TO REITERATE FOLLOWING:

A. VITAL IMPORTANCE OF SOUTHERN FLANK OF NATO, PARTICULARLY
GREEK-TURKISH ROLE IN NATO DEFENSE AGAINST POSSIBLE WARSAW PACT
AGGRESSION;

B. OVERRIDING IMPORTANCE WHICH U.S. ATTACHES TO MAINTENANCE OF
FRIENDLY RELATIONS BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY;

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C. KEY REQUIREMENT FOR RESTRAINT IN ACTION BY BOTH IN RELATION

TO AEGEAN OIL EXPLORATION QUESTION;

D. DESIRABILITY OF PUTTING OUTSTANDING IMMEDIATE ISSUE IN A BROADER SETTING OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES (FISHERIES, TOURISM, AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT, AND EVEN OIL EXPLORATION IN CONTESTED AREA).

2. IN REPLY TO TURKISH AMBASSADOR'S INQUIRY, I SAID GREEKS WERE DETERMINED TO MODERNIZE THEIR FORCES, POINTING OUT THAT THIS IN ITSELF COULD MAKE VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TO NATO DEFENSIVE POSTURE ON SOUTHERN FLANK. I ALSO INFORMED GURUN THAT I HAD MADE SIMILAR COMMENTS TO THE GREEKS, ADDING THAT I WAS GREATLY IMPRESSED WITH THE MANY STRONG PROPONENTS OF FRIENDSHIP WITH TURKEY AMONG THE GREEK ELITE. I NOTED THAT I WAS CERTAIN GOT WOULD GIVE THIS FACT ITS TRUE MEASURE OF SIGNIFICANCE.

3. GURUN RESPONDED THAT HE FULLY AGREED WITH POSTURE I HAD DESCRIBED. HE EVIDENTLY HAS ALSO BEEN SEEKING TO PERSUADE HIS GOVERNMENT OF NEED FOR BROADER APPROACH TO RELATIONS WITH GREECE. HOWEVER, GOT WAS CONCERNED LEST EFFECT OF GREEK AEGEAN POLICY WOULD MAKE TURKEY A LAND-LOCKED COUNTRY. ON OTHER HAND, GURUN WAS CLEARLY SUSPICIOUS OF GREEK MOTIVATIONS, PARTICULARLY AMONG THE MILITARY. IN THIS CONTEXT, HE SAID GOT WAS AWARE THAT IT WAS HIGHLY UNLIKELY PETROLEUM WOULD BE FOUND IN THE DISPUTED AEGEAN AREA, BUT THIS WAS NOT REPEAT NOT THE MAIN POINT. EVIDENTLY FROM HIS REMARKS TO ME IT IS MORE A QUESTION OF TURKEY NOT WISHING TO BE "CLOSED IN BY THE GREEK ISLANDS."

4. GURUN QUESTIONED ME CLOSELY ON WHETHER WE WERE DISCOURAGING AMERICAN COMPANIES FROM PARTICIPATING IN OIL EXPLORATION. I REPLIED THAT I THOUGHT US, AS A MATTER OF RESPONSIBILITY, WAS OBLIGED TO INFORM INTERESTED AMERICAN COMPANIES OF TENSIONS IN THE AEGEAN BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. I WAS NOT AWARE OF ANYTHING GOING BEYOND THIS KIND OF PRECAUTION AND SUGGESTED DEPARTMENT MIGHT HAVE MORE INFORMATION TO PROVIDE ON THIS POINT.

5. FINALLY, GURUN SUGGESTED I SHOULD AT SOME TIME VISIT ANKARA BECAUSE HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR HIGHEST LEVELS OF GOT TO HEAR MY APPROACH. I REPLIED THAT IT MIGHT BE INTERESTING FOR ME SOME TIME TO REVISIT ANKARA, BUT THAT IN THE MEANWHILE, WE
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HAD EXCELLENT AMBASSADOR THERE WHO WOULD BE RETURNING SOON FROM HIS LEAVE. IN VIEW OF GURUN'S OPINIONS, UNLESS IT HAS ALREADY DONE SO, DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO CONSIDER MAKING SIMILAR EXPOSITION TO GOT AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON.

6. COMMENT: FORTUNATELY, AEGEAN SITUATION APPEARS DEFUSED FOR THE TIME BEING. (WE NOW UNDERSTAND HYDROGRAPHIC SHIP HAS COMPLETED OPERATIONS AND IS RETURNING TO TURKEY.) SINCE IT WILL

PROBABLY BE CONSIDERABLE TIME BEFORE AN OIL DRILLING SHIP LIKELY TO BE AVAILABLE, THIS ISSUE IN ITSELF MAY NOT LEAD TO CONFRONTATION. HOWEVER, EACH SIDE CLEARLY WARY OF THE OTHER, AND BOTH STRONGLY DESIRE TO BEEF UP THEIR ARMED FORCES WITH NEW EQUIPMENT. WITH CYPRUS AN EVER-PRESENT PROBLEM WE MUST CONTINUE TO KEEP A CLOSE WATCHING BRIEF ON DEVELOPMENTS HERE. FURTHER, WE SHOULD TAKE EVERY APPROPRIATE OPPORTUNITY TO URGE ALL GREEKS AND TURKS TO JOIN IN A BROAD PROGRAM OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION. THIS COULD WELL BE BEST MEANS TO KEEP TEMPERATURES DOWN AND ENCOURAGE AND DEVELOP HABITS OF DEEPER COOPERATION TO ENSURE AGAINST THREAT OF CONFRONTATION.

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